Heritage Tourism Plan
Henderson County, North Carolina

Prepared by Henderson County Travel & Tourism
and the Henderson County Heritage Tourism Council

April 2005
Tourism, Our History, Our Heritage

• Henderson County has been a popular tourist destination for more than a century.
• Visitors are drawn to the area by:
  – natural, scenic beauty of the area
  – cultural attractions
  – resorts
  – clean air
  – cooler temperatures
  – abundant outdoor activities
Tourism Impact in Henderson County

- $161.76 Mil. Total Expenditures
- $36.59 Mil. Payroll
- 2,180 Jobs
- $7.84 Mil. State Tax Receipts
- $7.75 Mil. Local Tax Receipts
What is Heritage Tourism?

The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines cultural heritage tourism as traveling to experience the places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes cultural, historic, and natural resources.
Profile of the Heritage or Cultural Tourist

Visitors to historic and cultural attractions:

• Spend, on average, $631 per trip compared to $457 for all U.S. travelers
• Spend an average of 4.7 nights away from home as compared to 3.4 nights for all other travelers
• Higher income level and education
• Greater likelihood of staying in hotel, bed and breakfast inn, or resort
• More interest in shopping

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Heritage Tourism Sites

- National and state parks
- Downtowns and ethnic neighborhoods
- Historic monuments, buildings or heritage sites
- Theaters, music performances, or museums
- Heritage areas, natural sites or displays
- Festivals, fairs, or cultural events
- Art exhibits / galleries
- Folk life and craft centers
- Architectural and archeological treasures

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Thematic Structure of Our Heritage

Community
- Town Profiles
- People Profiles
- Ethnic Population
- Festivals / Events

People
- Descendants of Early Settlers
- Relocation
- Tourism
- Second Homes

Government
- County
- Municipalities

Economy
- Industry
- Tourism
- Agriculture
- Retirement

Transportation
- Roads
- Railroads
- Trails/Corridors
- Canoe Routes

Nature
- Geology
  - Topography
  - Gems & Minerals
  - Fossils
  - Bedrock
- Water
  - Watersheds
  - Rivers & Streams
  - Lakes & Ponds

Creativity
- Performing Arts
- Visual Arts
- Architecture
- Traditional Crafts
- New Inventions

Values
- Self Reliance
- Belief Systems
- Competing Values

Wildlife
- Birds
- Mammals
- Invertebrates
- Fishes
- Amphibians/Reptiles

Recreation
- Land, Water, and Wildlife

Climate
- Temperature
- Precipitation
- Seasons

Henderson County
Founded 1838

Based on concept from Maine Mountain Heritage Marketing Plan (2005)
Heritage Tourism Development

- Natural, cultural, and historic preservation
- Enhances and perpetuates our heritage and traditions
- Educates visitors and residents about local history and traditions
- Promotes the economic and civic vitality of the county
- Encourages community-based participation and collaboration
- Creates new public and private investment

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Heritage Tourism Benefits

Well-managed Heritage Tourism:

- Improves quality of life
- Builds community pride
- Creates new jobs
- Creates new business
- Increases property values
- Increases tax revenues
- Diversifies local economy

- Increases historic attraction ticket sales
- Preserves local traditions and culture
- Creates opportunities for partnerships
- Generates local investment in historical resources

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Henderson County Heritage Tourism Plan

• The Henderson County 2005 Strategic Plan, included a strategy to “Promote appropriate, compatible tourism” and identified participation in the development of a Heritage Tourism Plan as an action step for FY 2004-2005.
Blue Ridge National Heritage Area (BRNHA)

- 25 western counties of North Carolina designated as the “Blue Ridge National Heritage Area”
Blue Ridge National Heritage Area (BRNHA) Thematic Areas

- Cherokee
- Natural & Historic Sites
- Craft
- Music
- Agriculture
- Mountain Culture
- Educational Sites
Henderson County Heritage Tourism Council

- Public invitation to submit information about their organization, event, or attraction for review and consideration
- Public meeting held in November 2004
- Submissions were evaluated, key heritage tourism initiatives identified and prioritized
- Heritage Tourism Plan Draft Completed April 2005
Henderson County Heritage Tourism Plan

MISSION: To recognize, document and promote the unique heritage of Henderson County and provide for the preservation of its heritage while developing opportunities for public education, appreciation, and participation in the county’s heritage.
Heritage Tourism Plan Initiatives

• Based on proposals submitted by local stakeholders or developed during the planning process
• Develop, enhance, and preserve natural, historic, and cultural sites
• Increase access to opportunities by capitalizing on the growing heritage tourism industry and the popularity of our area
• Improve sustainability by supporting economic growth and tourism
Heritage Tourism Plan Initiatives
Heritage Tourism Plan
Initiatives

- Historic / Cultural
- Natural & Recreation
- Agro-Tourism
- Ethnic Heritage
- Infrastructure
- Education
Heritage Tourism Plan
Historic / Cultural Initiative

- Historic Henderson County Courthouse (Renovation)

2005 is Centennial Year
Heritage Tourism Plan
Historic / Cultural Initiative

- Poet /Writer-in-Residence Program (Carl Sandburg National Historic Site)
Heritage Tourism Plan
Historic / Cultural Initiative

- Mill Center for the Arts (Cultural Performing Arts Center – Historic Grey Hosiery Mill)
Heritage Tourism Plan
Natural & Recreation Initiative

- **Dupont State Forest** - Welcome Center

- **Greenway System**
  - Connecting Dupont State Forest to Downtown Hendersonville, Buncombe, Transylvania, and Haywood Counties

"A greenway is a corridor of protected open space managed for conservation, recreation and non-motorized transportation."
Heritage Tourism Plan
Natural & Recreation Initiative

- **Scenic Byway** - Connecting the Historic Flat Rock Byway in Henderson County, the Pacolet River Byway in Polk County, and the Forest Heritage Scenic Highway in Transylvania County

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Heritage Tourism Plan
Natural & Recreation Initiative

• Scenic Byway (continued)
Heritage Tourism Plan
Agriculture / Agri-Tourism Initiative

- Blue Ridge Grown: Marketing, Promotion, Processing, and Distribution of Henderson County Agricultural Products

WELCOME TO BLUE RIDGE GROWN!

Your guide to fresh, locally grown produce and plants available from the local growers, farms, and nurseries of western NC.

www.BlueRidgeGrown.com
Heritage Tourism Plan
Agriculture / Agri-Tourism Initiative

- Farm Land Preservation and Young Farmer Support Initiative
Heritage Tourism Plan
Ethnic Heritage Initiative

- Foothills Scottish Highland Games & Festival
- International Festival / Henderson County Heritage Day
Heritage Tourism Plan Initiatives

Educational Initiative

- Flat Rock Playhouse
- YouTheatre
- Campus (K-Adult)

State Theater of North Carolina
Heritage Tourism Plan Initiatives
Educational Initiative

- Bullington Center - Horticultural Education Center

Mission:
To educate and inspire children and adults in horticulture, the natural sciences, and integrated disciplines; to provide hands-on learning opportunities for members of our community.

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Heritage Tourism Plan
Infrastructure Initiative

- Rail Reuse Strategy
  - Preliminary Assessment, Acquisition, and Reuse Strategy for Abandoned Rail Corridors
Heritage Tourism Plan
Infrastructure Initiative

• **Passenger / Excursion Rail Service** – Rail System for public transportation between Downtown Hendersonville (7th Avenue Depot) & Asheville (proposed multi-model station at Biltmore Village)

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“Southern Railway Station, Hendersonville, N.C.” (P647), Jody Barber Photographic Collection, D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collections, UNC Asheville 28804
Heritage Tourism Plan
Infrastructure Initiative
Rail Corridors (Western North Carolina)
Heritage Tourism Plan
Infrastructure Initiative

Proposed Passenger Rail Service
Heritage Tourism Plan
Educational Initiative

• Dupont State Forest -  
  - Demonstration for Public Education

• Hands On! A Child’s Gallery – Interactive Learning Center

• Historic Johnson Farm - owned by the Henderson County Public Schools and operated as a heritage education center and farm museum

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Heritage Tourism Plan
Infrastructure Initiative

- **Multi-purpose Meeting Facility** – Blue Ridge Community College – proposed Technology Development Center

- **Henderson County Travel and Tourism** - Heritage Tourism Council
Heritage Tourism Plan
Infrastructure Initiative

- Henderson County Heritage Tourism Council - Promotion and Implementation of the Henderson County Heritage Tourism Plan

(continued...)
Heritage Tourism Plan
Infrastructure Initiative

• Henderson County Heritage Tourism Plan - The plan is a “living” document that will evolve and grow to meet the needs of our citizens and visitors
• Updates and revisions as required
• County-wide collaboration and partnerships
• Information Sharing

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Heritage Tourism Plan
Infrastructure Initiative

- Heritage Tourism Plan Implementation & Product Development
  - Assigned council members will:
  - Track the progress of the different initiatives
  - Report to the council on a regular basis
  - Council will meet bi-annually to
  - Review progress
  - Update and revise the plan, as required, to carry out the plan’s “Mission”

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Heritage Tourism Plan Infrastructure Initiative

• Heritage Tourism Web Site
  – To provide data and information to the public
  – Display
    – Interactive Thematic Trails
    – Maps, Images
    – Site Descriptions
    – Location Directions
  – Help implement and sustain the Heritage Tourism Plan

(continued...)
Heritage Tourism Plan
Infrastructure Initiative

• Henderson County Heritage Resource Inventory and Map
  – Cultural, Historic, and Natural Amenities
  – Geographic Information System (GIS) that will geographically tie information to specific location of each resource
  – Photographic Images
  – Location Directions

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Discover, Explore, and Celebrate Our Blue Ridge Heritage